



# Hot off the Grill

Food Service Food Safety Newsletter

## What's in this issue?

**Page 1...Hepatitis A.** Black lights and you.

**Page 2...Hepatitis A,cont.** The Pennsylvania outbreak.

## Read & Sign:


## Did You Know???

That a "black light" (ultraviolet lamp) is pretty much the same as



a standard fluorescent bulb used in overhead lights? Both bulbs have mercury vapor

that give off green, blue, purple and UV light when they are lit. The difference between the bulbs is the coating on the glass tube. Fluorescent tubes have a white coating while black light tubes have a black film or are made with dark blue glass.

**What does a black light have to do with your establishment?** A black light can do what ordinary light bulbs cannot—show unseen signs. Black lights can show signs of rodent urine or inadequate food worker hand-washing (when used with a special powder). See your inspector if you'd like a demonstration.

## Hepatitis A

AKA Viral, short-incubation, or infectious hepatitis

### What is hepatitis?

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. Inflammation is a protective function of the body following an injury. It will cause the organ to swell, redden, and not perform as usual. Many different medical conditions and agents (including toxins, drugs, or viruses) can cause the liver to inflame.

### What causes Hep A?

Hepatitis A is caused by the Hepatitis A Virus (HAV). It is spread by human feces through the fecal-oral route. Hepatitis A is not related to the other viruses that can cause hepatitis (such as Hep B, C, D, or E).

### Can you get hepatitis A from food or water?

In addition to getting hepatitis A directly from infected people (through close, intimate contact), you can get hepatitis A by:

- eating fruits, vegetables, or other foods that become contaminated during handling
- eating shellfish harvested from sewage-contaminated water
- swallowing contaminated water or ice.

### What are the symptoms of hepatitis A?

Children who are infected with hepatitis A often have no symptoms, but about 75% of adults who get the virus will have symptoms. Symptoms usually develop over a period of several days or weeks and may include:

- Nausea, vomiting, fever
- Tiredness, stomach ache
- Loss of appetite
- Yellow eyes, dark urine

A person can spread HAV about two weeks before symptoms appear and during the first week of symptoms.

### Infected people with no symptoms can still spread the virus.

Hepatitis A usually does not cause death or chronic (long-lasting) infection. Once a person recovers from hepatitis A, he or she will never get it again.

### Can the hepatitis A virus be destroyed?

The virus is killed by heating to 185 degrees Fahrenheit (85 degrees Celsius) for 1 minute. However, the virus can still be spread by cooked foods if they are contaminated after cooking.

Adequate chlorination of water, as recommended in the United States, also destroys HAV.

## What about the hepatitis A outbreak in Pennsylvania?

The Pennsylvania Department of Health and CDC are investigating a hepatitis A outbreak among restaurant customers in Monaca, PA. Currently, the cause of the outbreak is associated with eating green onions, which were likely contaminated during growing, harvesting, packing or storage.

As of November 20, there are about 555 people reported with hepatitis A. Immune globulin (IG) has been given to approximately 9,000 people who ate at the restaurant to prevent them from getting sick. Three people with hepatitis A from this outbreak have died.

Thirteen of the foodworkers are also positive for hepatitis A; all became ill after the outbreak began (suggesting that the food workers were not the source of the outbreak). The infected food workers, however, were working in the restaurant while they were infectious in November, and could have spread it to additional restaurant customers.

This Pennsylvania outbreak is unusually large. Although contaminated green onions have been implicated, several of the preparation and handling activities at the restaurant could have contributed to the outbreak's size. These unfortunate activities *and tips to prevent them from happening in your facility* include:

Mixing several bundles of green onions together (possibly contaminating fresh onions with older, contaminated ones). *Germ is easy to spread; be careful not to commingle (mix) old foods with new foods.*

Preparing large quantities of foods (e.g., fresh salsa) with long shelf lives that were served to large numbers of patrons over several days. *Prepare foods in quantities sufficient for one day to limit the number of people potentially ill.*

Possibly causing secondary infections by working while ill. *Germ can spread from us even when we don't look or feel sick—always be careful to handwash often and prevent bare hand contact with ready to eat foods.*

Source: Centers for Disease Control Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) for November 21, 2003. [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm52d1121a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm52d1121a1.htm)

Benton-Franklin Health District  
Environmental Health Surveillance  
800 West Canal Drive  
(509) 582-7761  
[www.bfhd.wa.gov](http://www.bfhd.wa.gov)

Jean Ross, EHS IV, Supervisor  
582.7761 ext.253 [jeanr@bfhd.wa.gov](mailto:jeanr@bfhd.wa.gov)  
Paul Patrick, EHS II  
582.7761 ext.260 [paulp@bfhd.wa.gov](mailto:paulp@bfhd.wa.gov)  
Judy Kitchen, EHS I  
582.7761 ext.264 [judyk@bfhd.wa.gov](mailto:judyk@bfhd.wa.gov)  
Guy Barnes, EHS I  
582.7761 ext.259 [guyb@bfhd.wa.gov](mailto:guyb@bfhd.wa.gov)  
Missy Skelton, EHS I  
582.7761 ext.263 [melissas@bfhd.wa.gov](mailto:melissas@bfhd.wa.gov)  
Emily Kyle, EHS I  
582.7761 ext.262 [emilyk@bfhd.wa.gov](mailto:emilyk@bfhd.wa.gov)  
Susan Shelton, EHS II, editor  
582.7761 ext.258 [susans@bfhd.wa.gov](mailto:susans@bfhd.wa.gov)

## Websites of Interest:

### Hepatitis A

CDC National Center for Infectious Diseases-Viral Hepatitis  
[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/index.htm)

BFHD Hepatitis A Brochure  
[www.bfhd.wa.gov/forms/brochures/BFHD-E-0006.pdf](http://www.bfhd.wa.gov/forms/brochures/BFHD-E-0006.pdf)

BFHD Hepatitis A Prevention Brochure  
[www.bfhd.wa.gov/forms/brochures/BFHD-E-0030.pdf](http://www.bfhd.wa.gov/forms/brochures/BFHD-E-0030.pdf)

### Food Regulations

Washington State Department of Health Food Code Revision Status  
[www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/FoodRuleMain.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/FoodRuleMain.htm)

### Foreign Language Food Safety Information

USDA/FDA Foodborne Illness Education Information Center  
<http://peaches.nal.usda.gov/foodborne/fbindex/NonEnglishResources.asp>

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service  
[www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/languages.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/languages.htm)

### Food Safety Ideas for Children

Partnership for Food Safety  
[www.fooddetectives.com](http://www.fooddetectives.com)

American Museum of Natural History "Infection Detection Protection"  
[www.amnh.org/nationalcenter/infection](http://www.amnh.org/nationalcenter/infection)

### Handwashing Education

Purell  
[www.purell.com/educator](http://www.purell.com/educator)